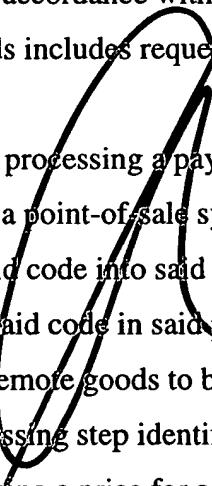What is claimed is:

1. A method of processing a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising the steps of:

inputting a code relating to a purchase of goods into a point-of-sale system;

processing said code to determine if said code identifies local goods or remote goods

to be purchased from and controlled by a remote seller;

5   if said processing step identifies remote goods, then

determining a price for said remote goods,

generating data to indicate a payment has been received for said remote goods,

and

transmitting for use by said remote seller data indicating that said payment has

10   been received for said remote goods.

2. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said step of determining a price for said

remote goods includes requesting said price from a remote party.

3. A method of processing a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a point-of-sale system a code relating to a purchase of goods;

inputting said code into said point-of-sale system;

processing said code in said point-of-sale system to determine if said code identifies

5   local goods or remote goods to be purchased from and controlled by a remote seller;

if said processing step identifies remote goods, then

determining a price for said remote goods,

receiving a payment for said remote goods, and

transmitting for use by said remote seller data indicating that said payment has

10   been received for said remote goods.

4. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said step of determining said price

comprises requesting said price from a remote party.

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5. A method in accordance with claim 4 wherein said step of requesting said price from a remote party includes requesting said price directly from said remote seller.

6. A method in accordance with claim 4 wherein said step of requesting said price from a remote party includes requesting said price from a third-party intermediary who receives said price from said remote seller.

7. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said step of determining said price comprises the step of deriving said price from said code.

8. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said step of processing said code to determine if said code identifies local goods or remote goods comprises the steps of:
   storing a plurality of product codes indicating locally sold goods;
   storing a plurality of merchant codes indicating remote goods; and
   comparing said code with at least one of said plurality of product codes and said plurality of merchant codes.

9. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said code comprises a barcode, and said step of inputting said code into said point of sale system comprises scanning said barcode.

10. A method in accordance with claim 9 wherein said barcode identifies a merchant, and further including the step of requesting an order code including further information relevant to said purchase.

11. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said step of transmitting for use by said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been received for said remote goods includes transmitting said data directly to said remote seller.

12. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein said step of transmitting for use by said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been received for said remote

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goods includes transmitting said data to a third-party intermediary for transmission to said remote seller.

13. A method in accordance with claim 12 and further including the step of selecting said third-party intermediary from a plurality of third-party intermediaries.

14. A method in accordance with claim 3 and further including the steps of:
    requesting an order code; and
    transmitting said order code to said remote seller with said data indicating that said payment has been received.

15. A method for a remote seller to process a payment for the sale of goods, comprising the steps of:
    receiving a remote order for a purchase of goods;
    generating a code and a purchase price for said order;
5   providing order data for use by a point-of-sale system of a local seller in receiving a payment for said order;
    receiving payment data confirming said payment has been paid at said point-of-sale system of said local seller;
    initiating, responsive to said payment data, the shipment of said goods; and
10 receiving a payment for said order from said local seller.

16. A method in accordance with claim 15 wherein said local seller comprises a third-party retailer having a contractual relationship including said remote seller.

17. A method in accordance with claim 15 wherein said step of providing order data includes providing at least one of said code and said purchase price.

18. A method in accordance with claim 17 wherein said step of providing order data comprises providing said order data directly to said local seller.

19. A method in accordance with claim 17 wherein said step of providing order data comprises providing said order data to a third party for transmission to said local seller.

20. A method in accordance with claim 19 and further including the step of selecting said third party based on the identity of said point-of-sale system.

21. A method in accordance with claim 15 wherein said step of providing order data comprises providing said order data responsive to said step of receiving an order.

22. A method in accordance with claim 15 wherein said step of providing order data comprises the steps of:
    receiving a request for said order data for use by said point-of-sale system; and
    providing said order data responsive to said step of receiving a request for said order
    data.

23. A method in accordance with claim 22 wherein said step of receiving a request for said order data includes receiving said request from said point-of-sale system.

24. A method in accordance with claim 22 wherein said step of receiving a request for said order data includes receiving said request from said local point-of-sale system through a third party.

25. A method in accordance with claim 15 wherein said step of receiving a remote order for the purchase of goods includes receiving said remote order by telephone.

26. A method in accordance with claim 15 wherein said step of receiving a remote order for the purchase of goods includes receiving said remote order through a computer data network.

27. A method of processing a payment for a sale of goods, comprising the steps of:

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receiving, by a processor from a remote seller, data relating to an order for goods;

receiving, by said processor from a local seller, data indicating a payment has been received at a point-of-sale system for said order for goods; and

5   transmitting, from said processor to said remote seller, data indicating that said payment has been received by said local seller whereby to initiate the delivery of said goods by said remote seller.

28. A method in accordance with claim 27 wherein said data relating to an order for goods includes at least one of a code and a purchase price, and further including the step of transmitting for use, from said processor to said local seller, at least one of said code and said purchase price.

29. A method in accordance with claim 27 wherein said local seller comprises a third party having a contractual relationship with said remote seller.

30. A method of submitting a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising the steps of:
    transmitting an order for the purchase of goods to a remote merchant;
    receiving a code and a purchase price for said order from said remote merchant;
    providing at least one of said code and said purchase price for use by a point-of-sale
5   system of a local seller in processing said payment for said order;
    submitting said payment to said local seller at said point-of-sale system; and
    receiving said goods from said remote merchant.

31. A method in accordance with claim 30 wherein said step of transmitting an order for the purchase of goods to said remote merchant includes transmitting said order by telephone.

32. A method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said step of transmitting an order for the purchase of goods to said remote merchant includes transmitting said order through a computer data network.

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33. Apparatus for processing a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising:

a point-of-sale system including a processor and a memory connected to said processor;

said memory storing instructions for controlling said processor; and

5   said processor operative to

receive a code relating to a purchase of goods;

process said code to determine if said code identifies local goods or remote goods to be purchased from and controlled by a remote seller;

if said code identifies remote goods, then

10   determine a price for said remote goods,

generate data to indicate receipt of a payment for said remote goods, and

transmit to said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been received for said remote goods.

34. Apparatus in accordance with claim 33 wherein said point-of-sale system is further operative to transmit a request for said price to a remote party.

35. Apparatus for processing a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising:

a point-of-sale system including a processor and a memory connected to said processor;

said memory storing instructions for controlling said processor; and

5   said processor operative to

receive a code relating to a purchase of goods;

process said code to determine if said code identifies local goods or remote goods to be purchased from and controlled by a remote seller;

if said code identifies remote goods, then

10   determine a price for said remote goods,

receive an indication of payment of said price for said remote goods, and

transmit to said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been received for said remote goods.

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36. Apparatus in accordance with claim 35 wherein said processor is further operative to transmit a request for said price to a remote party.

37. Apparatus in accordance with claim 36 wherein said request is transmitted directly to said remote seller.

38. Apparatus in accordance with claim 36 wherein said request is transmitted to a third-party who receives said price from said remote seller.

39. Apparatus in accordance with claim 35 wherein said processor is further operative to derive said price from said code.

40. Apparatus in accordance with claim 35 wherein:

said memory further contains a plurality of product codes indicating locally sold goods and a plurality of merchant codes indicating a plurality of remote sellers; and

said processor operative to compare said code with at least one of said plurality of product codes and said plurality of merchant codes, whereby to determine if said code identifies local goods or a remote seller.

41. Apparatus in accordance with claim 35 wherein said code comprises a barcode, and said point-of-sale system further comprising a barcode scanner connected to said processor and operative to scan said barcode.

42. Apparatus in accordance with claim 41 wherein said barcode identifies a merchant, said processor further operative to generate a request for an order code containing further information relevant to said purchase.

43. Apparatus in accordance with claim 35 wherein said processor is operative to transmit said data directly to said remote seller.

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44. Apparatus in accordance with claim 35 wherein said processor is operative to transmit said data to a third-party intermediary for transmission to said remote seller.

45. Apparatus in accordance with claim 44 wherein said processor is operative to select said third-party intermediary from a plurality of third-party intermediaries.

46. Apparatus for use by a remote seller in processing a payment for a sale of goods, comprising:

a processor;

a memory connected to said processor and storing instructions for controlling said

5   processor;

said processor operative to

receive purchase data relating to a remote order for a purchase of goods,

generate a code and a purchase price for said remote order,

generate order data for use by a point-of-sale system of a local seller in receiving

10   a payment for said order,

receive payment data confirming said payment has been paid at said point-of-sale system of said local seller,

generate delivery data to initiate, responsive to said payment data, the shipment of said goods to said consumer, and

15   receive verification data indicating receipt of said purchase price from said local seller.

47. Apparatus in accordance with claim 46 wherein said local seller comprises a third party having a contractual relationship including said remote seller.

48. Apparatus in accordance with claim 46 wherein said order data includes at least one of said code and said purchase price.

49. Apparatus in accordance with claim 48 wherein said processor is operative to initiate the transmission of said order data to said local seller.

50. Apparatus in accordance with claim 48 wherein said processor is operative to initiate the transmission of said order data to a third party for transmission to said local seller.

51. Apparatus in accordance with claim 50 wherein:

said memory further contains information identifying a plurality of third parties and a plurality of point-of-sale systems; said processor further operative to

select said third party based on an identity of said point-of-sale system.

52. Apparatus in accordance with claim 48 , wherein said processor is operative to output said order data responsive to said operation of receiving an order.

53. Apparatus in accordance with claim 48 wherein said processor is operative to:

receive a request for said order data; and

provide said order data responsive to said request.

54. Apparatus in accordance with claim 53 wherein said processor is operative to receive said request from said point-of-sale system.

55. Apparatus in accordance with claim 53 wherein said processor is operative to receive said request from said local point-of-sale system through a third party.

56. Apparatus in accordance with claim 46 and further including means connected to said processor for receiving said order data by telephone.

57. Apparatus in accordance with claim 46 and further including means connected to said processor for receiving said order data through a computer data network.

58. Apparatus for processing a payment for a sale of goods, comprising:

a processor;

a memory connected to said processor and storing instructions for controlling said processor; and

5   said processor operative to

receive from a remote seller order data relating to an order for goods,

store in said memory said order data,

receive from a local seller payment data indicating a payment has been received at a point-of-sale system for said sale of goods,

10   store in said memory said payment data, and

transmit, to said remote seller, verification data indicating that said payment has been received by said local seller whereby to initiate the delivery of said goods by said remote seller.

59. Apparatus in accordance with claim 58 wherein said order data includes at least one of a code and a purchase price, and wherein said payment data includes at least one of said code and said purchase price.

60. Apparatus in accordance with claim 58 wherein said local seller comprises a third party having a contractual relationship with said remote seller.

61. Apparatus for processing a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising:

means for inputting a code relating to a purchase of goods into a point-of-sale system;

means for processing said code to determine if said code identifies local goods or remote goods to be purchased from and controlled by a remote seller; and

5   means, if said code identifies remote goods, for

determining a price for said remote goods,

generating data to indicate a payment has been received for said remote goods, and

transmitting to said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been

10   received for said remote goods.

62. Apparatus for processing a payment for a purchase of goods, comprising:

means for receiving at a point-of-sale system a code relating to a purchase of goods;

means for inputting said code into said point-of-sale system;

means for processing said code in said point-of-sale system to determine if said code

5   identifies local goods or remote goods to be purchased from and controlled by a remote

seller; and

means, if said code identifies remote goods, for

determining a price for said remote goods,

receiving a payment of said price for said remote goods, and

10   transmitting to said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been

received for said remote goods.

63. Apparatus for processing a payment for the sale of goods, comprising:

means for receiving a remote order for a purchase of goods;

means for generating a code and a purchase price for said order;

means for providing order data for use by a point-of-sale system of a local seller in

5   receiving a payment for said order;

means for receiving payment data confirming said payment has been paid at said

point-of-sale system of a local seller;

means for initiating, responsive to said payment data, a shipment of said goods; and

means for receiving payment of said purchase price from said local seller.

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64. Apparatus for processing a payment for a sale of goods, comprising:

means for receiving, by a processor from a remote seller, data relating to an order for

goods;

means for receiving, by said processor from a local seller, data indicating a payment

5   has been received at a point-of-sale system for said order for goods; and

means for transmitting, from said processor to said remote seller, data indicating that

said payment has been received by said local seller whereby to initiate a delivery of said

goods by said remote seller.

65. An article of manufacture comprising:

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a computer-readable medium having computer-readable program code means stored thereon for controlling a computer to process a payment for a purchase of goods, said computer-readable program code means including

5   program code for inputting a purchase code relating to a purchase of goods into a point-of-sale system;

program code for processing said purchase code to determine if said purchase code identifies local goods or remote goods to be purchased from and controlled by a remote seller;

10   program code, if said purchase code identifies remote goods, for

determining a price for said remote goods,

receiving a payment for said remote goods, and

transmitting for use by said remote seller data indicating that said payment has been received for said remote goods.

66. An article of manufacture comprising:

a computer-readable medium having computer-readable program code means stored thereon for controlling a computer to process a payment for a purchase of goods, said computer-readable program code means including

5   program code for receiving a remote order for a purchase of goods;

program code for generating a purchase code and a purchase price for said remote order;

program code for providing data for use by a point-of-sale system of a local seller in receiving a payment for said remote order;

10   program code for receiving data confirming said payment has been paid at said point-of-sale system of a local seller;

program code for initiating, responsive to said receiving data, the shipment of said goods; and

program code for receiving a payment for said order from said local seller.

67. An article of manufacture comprising:

a computer-readable medium having computer-readable program code means stored thereon for controlling a computer to process a payment for a purchase of goods, said computer-readable program code means including

5   program code for receiving, by a processor from a remote seller, data relating to an order for goods;

program code for receiving, by said processor from a local seller, data indicating a payment has been received at a point-of-sale system for said order for goods; and

program code for transmitting, from said processor to said remote seller, data

10   indicating that said payment has been received by said local seller whereby to initiate the delivery of said goods by said remote seller.